United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/968
5 September 1991

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General appeals to all parties in Western Sahara to refrain from acts that might compromise United Nations Referendum Plan.

- Secretary-General expresses encouragement over recent talks on possible elements of an overall framework agreement on Cyprus held by his Personal Representative.

- Pele is introduced as Goodwill Ambassador for Earth Summit, scheduled for next summer in Rio de Janeiro.

- Heitor Gurgulino de Suoza is appointed Rector of United Nations University for second term.

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A United Nations spokesman announced today that Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar had called on the parties in Western Sahara to refrain from acts that might compromise the United Nations Referendum Plan.

The Secretary-General's appeal is coming on the eve of the entry into force of the cease-fire, which has been accepted by the parties in the context of the UN plan.

The spokesman said the Secretary-General wished to reiterate the vital importance that attached to the parties abiding by their commitments and to the complete halting of all their military operations, including troop movements and reinforcements, as well as all acts of violence or intimidation that might compromise the implementations of the Plan.

The first 50 military observers, as well as 15-20 civilians, were scheduled to leave for Western Sahara today, in order to be in place in the advance post for the supervision of the cease-fire tomorrow, 6 September.

The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) is expected to comprise a total of 240 UN personnel, including 100 military observers and a small medical team.

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For information media—not an official record

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The Secretary-General has expressed encouragement over a report by his Personal Representative, Oscar Camilion, and the alternate Personal Representative, Gustave Feissel, indicating that the discussions that have taken place to date might bear the possible elements of an an overall framework agreement on Cyprus.

A UN Spokesman said the Secretary-General was of the view that a high-level international meeting in September to conclude this agreement remained possible. To that end, he said, the Secretary-General calls on all concerned to redouble their efforts and cooperate with his representatives in completing the work in the coming days.

* * *

The third round of preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, currently held in Geneva, has resumed consideration of cross-sectoral issues, taking up sustainability, the international economy, integrated economic-environmental accounting and economic instruments.

During the meeting, Edson Arantes do Nascimento Pele, Goodwill Ambassador for the Earth Summit, in a brief appearance before the Committee, thanked the Secretary-General of the Conference, Maurice Strong, for giving him "this very, very hard job". He added: "This team is our team. We do not play against anything but for something -- for a better future for the world."

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The Secretary-General has re-appointed Heitor Urgulino de Souza rector of the United Nations University for another term of five years, starting from 1 September 1992.

Mr. de Souza, a national of Brazil, was first appointed Rector of the United Nations University for a five-year term on 1 September 1987. At the time of his first appointment, he was the President of the Latin American University Group, the head of the Planning Commission of the Federal Council of Education in the Brazilian Ministry of Education, and a member of the United Nations University Council.

The United Nations University was established by the General Assembly in 1972. It began operations from its headquarters office in Tokyo, Japan, in 1975.

As an international community of scholars, the University is engaged in research, post-graduate training and dissemination of knowledge into pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

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DH/969
6 September 1991

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General to visit Tehran on Monday, 10 September, for talks on Afghanistan and Iran-Iraq situations; will also travel to Paris to attend first Advisory Committee meeting of the Global Coalition for Africa.

- Preparatory Committee for 1992 "Earth Summit" ends session in Geneva.

- Secretary-General announces formation of Special High Level Council for Natural Disaster Reduction Decade.

- $6.4 million in new pledges to Cambodian Assistance Programmes announced at donors meeting at headquarters.

- Vienna Conference calls for reinforcement of nuclear regulatory oversight; sees possibility of enacting international safety convention.

- New Permanent Representative of Namibia presents credentials.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar will leave New York over the weekend for Paris where he will attend the first Advisory Committee meeting of the global Coalition for Africa.

On Monday, 10 September, he will leave Paris for Tehran at the invitation of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In Tehran, the Secretary-General will hold meetings with the President, relative to the implementation of Security Council resolution 598 (1987) on Iran/Iraq. He will also participate in a tripartite meeting with the Presidents of Iran and Pakistan on the situation in Afghanistan.

On Thursday, 13 September, the Secretary-General will leave Tehran for Saudi Arabia for talks with the authorities there and with officials of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) on resolution 598 and on Afghanistan.

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For information media—not an official record

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar is expected to return to Headquarters on Sunday, 15 September.

* * *

The Committee preparing for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on Wednesday concluded its third substantive session in Geneva, agreeing to continue negotiations on proposals intended to acheive environmentally sound, sustainable economic development in all countries.

In his concluding remarks, the Secretary-General for the 1992 Conference, Maurice Strong, said the Preparatory Committee had laboured long and hard under difficult conditions. However, he said, it had "moved a long and positive step towards success in Rio de Janeiro".

Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Tommy Koh of Singapore, also characterized the session as a success. He said agreement had been reached on human settlements and substantial progress had been made on "the difficult issues" of finance for sustainable development in developing countries and on the transfer of environmentally sound technology.

The Committee agreed on a framework for Agenda 21, which will serve as a blueprint for action into the twenty-first century to ensure sustainable development in all areas where economic activity impacts on the natural environment.

* * *

The Secretary-General today announced the establishment of the Special High Level Council for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

The members of the Council are: Prime Minister M. Eugenia Charles of Dominica; Princess Chulabborn Mahinol of Thailand; Former Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda of Japan; Former President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado of Mexico; Susan Mubarak of Egypt; Idé Oumarou of Niger; Lisbeth Palme of Sweden; Marilyn Quayle of the United States; Janez Stanovnik of Yugoslavia; and M.C. Zalikhanov of the Soviet Union.

The Council members will advise the Secretary-General on the Decade; promote public awareness of the potential for disaster reduction; and mobilize the support of the public and private sectors towards the objectives of the Decade.

* * *

New pledges amounting to $6.4 million for the United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) and programmes assisting displaced persons in Cambodia were made yesterday at a meeting of donors to the Cambodian Humanitarian Assistance Programmes. In-kind contributions valuing $1.1 million were also pledged.

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Of the cash contributions, $6 million was pledged by Japan and $400,000 by Germany. France pledged in-kind contributions including 4,000 tons of grain for the relief effort.

In a statement at the meeting, Shah A.M.S. Kibria, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Coordination of Cambodian Humanitarian Assistance Programmes, stressed the importance of continuing support pending the final resolution of the political situation in that country.

He said support was needed for the massive repatriation operation in particular, to improve the food and security situation in the border camps.

* * *

The need to strengthen and integrate international approaches to all aspects of nuclear safety was underlined by over three hundred experts from more than 40 countries and ten international organizations at a one-week Conference which ended in Vienna today.

The Conference, held at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) headquarters, expressed support for intensifying international safety services such as the IAEA's ASSET (Assessment of Safety Significant Events Team) and OSART (Operational Safety Review Team) missions. It also advocated promoting the achievement of sufficient national regulatory oversight, and using tools such as the seven level International Nuclear Event Scale, to better inform the media and the public, should incidents occur.

There was also agreement on exploring ways of bolstering the international nuclear safety regime, including a step-by-step approach that might ultimately include a framework international safety convention.

During the Conference the delegation of the Soviet Union offered to open its RBMK (Chernobyl-type) reactors for an international safety assessment by the IAEA, similar to the IAEA's current assessment of the VVER 440-230 reactors in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

* * *

Tunguru Huaraka, the new Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations, has presented his credentials to Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar.

Since 1980, Mr. Huaraka has been a human rights officer at the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, as well as Secretary of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. He began his career in 1968 as legal adviser to the International Publishing Corporation. From 1971 to 1974, he was lecturer in law at the University of Dar es Salaam. During that period, he served for two years as associate editor of the Eastern Africa Law Review.

Mr. Huaraka earned his doctorate in political science at the Graduate Institute of International Studies at Geneva, which he attended from 1974 to 1979. He holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Ghana at Accra and a Master of Laws degree from the University College London.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/970
9 September 1991

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General recommends that Security Council raise ceiling for Iraqi oil sales by $800 million -- to a total of $2.4 billion -- to meet needs for foodstuff and medical supplies.

- Secretary-General's Executive Delegate expresses concern over reports of serious clashes in northern Iraq between Government and non-government forces.

- Secretary-General attends meeting of global coalition for Africa.

- Secretary-General calls for stepped-up efforts to eradicate illiteracy.

- Secretary-General appeals for $400 million for Horn of Africa.

- Third Review Conference of Parties to Convention on Biological Weapons begins in Geneva.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has recommended in a report to the Security Council, dated 4 September, that it raise the ceiling for Iraqi oil sales to a total of $2.4 billion -- $800 million more than the original amount authorized by the Council -- to enable Iraq to earn enough money for much-needed food and medical supplies.

The Council had authorized all States, by its resolution 706 (1991) of 15 August, to permit import of Iraqi oil products during a period of six months to produce a sum not to exceed $1.6 billion. The Council decided that Iraqi earnings should go into an escrow account to finance Iraq's humanitarian needs under tight United Nations control. Part of the sum should be used to pay compensation for war damages caused by the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait.

The Secretary-General said in his report that he had made his recommendation on the basis of estimates by his Executive Delegate, Sadruddin

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Aga Khan, who recently returned from a humanitarian inter-agency mission to Iraq. The mission found that the present food, health and nutrition situation in Iraq was "critical", and that the problems of the severely debilitated population were aggravated by widespread shortages of essential medicines and medical supplies.

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The Secretary-General's Executive Delegate, Sadruddin Aga Khan, has expressed concern over recent reports of serious clashes in northern Iraq between Government and non-Government forces. He said today in a statement issued in Geneva that the incidents were threatening to impede "any meaningful humanitarian endeavour".

The Executive Delegate appealed to all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint so that the "essential humanitarian objectives can be realized in the interest of Iraq's entire population".

* * *

The Secretary-General today participated in the second day of a meeting of the Global Coalition for Africa taking place in Paris. Edwige Avice, Minister for Cooperation and Development of France, is Chairman of the meeting, as representative of the host country. The meeting is organized jointly by the World Bank and the Botswana Government which is represented by President Ouett Ketumile Joni Masire who was the first speaker this morning.

Later today, the Secretary-General was scheduled to meet with the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of France, Roland Dumas, for an exchange of views on recent international developments.

The Secretary-General will leave tomorrow, 10 September, for Tehran.

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In a statement issued yesterday to mark the twenty-sixth anniversary of International Literacy Day, the Secretary-General stressed that considerable progress had been made since the appeal for the eradication of illiteracy launched by the World Conference of Ministers of Education gathered in Tehran in 1965. The literacy rate had increased and the number of adult illiterates had begun to drop world-wide. "There is today a new awareness of the importance of literacy in the development world", said the Secretary-General. However, he said, much remained to be done and only through sustained efforts and renewed commitment could these achievements be transmitted to all the peoples of the world.

The Secretary-General also paid special tribute to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for taking the lead in promoting literacy programmes as part of its campaign for education for all. He called on the international community to step up its efforts so that

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illiteracy could be significantly reduced by the end of the century.

* * *

The Secretary-General has invited some 68 donor and affected countries to attend a pledging conference next Monday, 16 September, in connection with the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Special Emergency Programme for the Horn of Africa.

The appeal was announced today in Nairobi by Under-Secretary-General James Jonah, asking for $400 million to meet the emergency needs of an estimated 22.5 million people in five countries of the region, from 1 September to the end of this year.

* * *

The States Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bactoriological and Toxic Weapons and on their Destruction began today in Geneva their third review of the Convention.

First international agreement to provide for genuine disarmament, that is, the destruction of existing weapons, the Convention entered into force 16 years ago. The depository Governments are the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States. As of 31 August 1991, 115 States were parties to it.

In a message sent to the second Review Conference in 1986, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar had stated that the Biological Weapons Convention constituted the first, and, so far, the only international legally binding instrument to prohibit and prevent the development, production and stockpiling of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/971
10 September 1991

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General says in annual report on work of Organization that 1991 was the year when most United Nations operations were mounted.

- Security Council holds consultations to discuss allegations of Iraqi refusal to allow team of Special Commission of Iraqi Disarmament to inspect weapon sites.

- Iraq returns valuable items removed from Kuwait's national library with assistance from United Nations team.

- Secretary-General finds that progress towards ending apartheid in South Africa, although "halting", has remained on course.

- Security Council refers applications of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania to Committee on Admission of New Members.

* * *

In his annual report for 1991 on the work of the Organization, issued today at Headquarters, the Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar said that never before had the United Nations gained so many new insights about the varied tasks of peace-keeping or peace-making in various troubled parts of the world such as Namibia, Haiti, Angola, Nicaragua and most notably in Central America, particularly in El Salvador.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar went on to say that during the period under review, the Security Council had taken action of extraordinary consequence to reverse the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq and to deter aggression in the future. It had authorized the use of force on a national and coalition basis. However, he said, the experience of operations in the Gulf suggested the need for a collective reflection on the question of the future use of powers vested in the Security Council under Chapter VII.

The Secretary-General also stressed on what preventive diplomacy by the United Nations was required. The main problem today, he said, was the same as before: the lack of means at the disposal of the world body to maintain an

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impartial and effective global watch over situations of potential and incipient conflict. He stated that the pool of information available to the Secretary-General is "wholly inadequate".

Deprived of access to the technological means, it was hard to visualize how the Secretariat would monitor potential conflict situations from a clearly impartial standpoint. Furthermore, he said, it was hardly comprehensible that Governments impose far-reaching and costly responsibilities on the Organization, as they judge they must, but were themselves unwilling to fulfil corresponding financial obligations. He said that at the time of writing the report, the level of outstanding contributions to the regular budget was over $800 million, and only 49 Member States had fully paid their annual contributions.

Speaking about the human rights situation in the world, the Secretary-General noted that, although there had been legitimate satisfaction at providing the world community with the International Bill of Human Rights, indiscriminate use of power was still being used to brutalize populations into submission.

He also mentioned the sustained efforts being made over decades to end apartheid in South Africa as evidence of the profound and active concern of the United Nations with eradicating racial segregation and persecution. However, he said, in many instances the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations had been a helpless witness rather than an effective agent for checking human wrongs.

Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar further observed that one of the main sources of chronic instability in the world was the militarization of human society. He said that in the present political context there were new perspectives for weaving collective approaches in the field of arms limitation and disarmament more tightly into the fabric of peace-making and conflict control. The opportunities now presented to us are not likely to remain indefinitely open, he said.

Speaking about the overall economic situation, the Secretary-General stressed that, while some regions of the world had enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, others, mostly developing countries, had suffered a decline in their economic standing. It was clear, he said, that what was needed was a renewal of the commitment arrived at in the compact between African countries and the international community five years ago. There was no greater human and economic imperative that to initiate and implement plans for creating conditions that would allow sustainable development in the entire developing world, especially in Africa.

On the environmental issue, the Secretary-General said that the Conference on Environment and Development - scheduled for June 1992 in Brazil - represented a test of the willingness of Governments to adopt long-term policies on matters of vast significance to human well-being - even survival.

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Mobilizing new and adequate financial resources to support sustainable development and agreement on terms for the transfer of technology would need focused attention.

The Secretary-General stated that it had been his privilege to serve the Organization during what had generally been regarded as some of its most productive years. Throughout the latter period, he said, he had felt compelled to dwell on problems that were still to be resolved than "to muse on accomplishments". Those problems included initiatives to overcome serious difficulties in averting conflicts, eradicating poverty and protecting human rights.

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The Security Council held consultations this morning to discuss allegations that Iraqi authorities had refused to allow an inspection team of the Special Commission on Iraqi Disarmament to fly its helicopters over an Iraqi weapon site.

United Kingdom Ambassador Sir David Hannay told correspondents, following the meeting, that the Iraqi action appeared to be completely inconsistent with the Security Council's resolution 707 (1991) of 15 August demanding that Iraq allow "full, final and complete disclosure of all weapon sites".

* * *

With the assistance of a United Nations team, Iraq began today the return of valuable items removed from Kuwait's national library during its occupation of that country.

A United Nations spokesman announced that the handover of some 120,000 books and manuscripts was to take place at a designated site on the border of Saudi Arabia and Iraq near the Saudi town of Arar, in the presence of United Nations officials.

Iraq would subsequently begin returning items of Kuwait's National Museum to the United Nations team, a process which would take about three weeks. Iraq would also return aircraft engines and spare parts, items which have been designated "a priority" by Kuwait.

The transfer of gold bricks banknotes and coins had already been completed, the spokesman said.

* * *

The Secretary-General has found that the process towards ending apartheid in South Africa, "although halting, remained on course" during the last 12 months. Mr. Pérez de Cuellar was commenting on the process of the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, in his second progress report on the implementation of the United Nations 1989 Declaration on Apartheid and Its Destructive Consequences.

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He noted that despite laws to remove apartheid, the socio-economic inequalities in South Africa, which still persisted, could jeopardize a process which would probably be "lengthy" and "vulnerable". The wave of violence in South Africa was a "serious obstacle to the evolving political dialogue" and the impartiality of the security forces was in question. The Secretary-General expressed hope, however, that the recent initiatives aimed at ending violence would allow the process of change to regain momentum.

* * *

The Security Council this morning referred the applications for United Nations membership from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to the Committee on the Admission of New Members. The applications were submitted to the Secretary-General last week by the Permanent Representatives of France and the United Kingdom.

The Council will take a decision on the Committee's report on Thursday, 12 September.

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United Nations

Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/972
11 September 1991

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General welcomes Israeli Defence Ministry announcement to release 51 Arab prisoners.

- Secretary-General, on last day of two-day official visit to Tehran, holds meeting with President and Foreign Minister of Iran.

- Annual NGO Conference organized by Department of Public Information opens at Headquarters; to focus on role in emerging world order.

- Secretary-General welcomes Guatemalan Government's recognition of independent and sovereign State of Belize.

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A United Nations official told correspondents today that the Secretary-General had welcomed the Israeli Defence Ministry's announcement to free 51 Arab prisoners in an effort to resolve the hostage crisis.

The official said Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar was encouraged by "this further step" and that he would now redouble his efforts to find a solution to the problem of all hostages, detainees and missing persons.

* * *

On the second day of a two-day official visit at the invitation of the Government of Iran, Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar met today in Tehran with Iranian President Ali-Akbar Hasemi Rafsanjani and Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

A United Nations Official told correspondents at Headquarters, that Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar and the Iranian Foreign Minister had reviewed the various paragraphs of resolution 598 (1987), which remains to be fully implemented. They also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the Secretary-General expressed his concern that the situation there might deteriorate further. He expressed his gratitude to the Government of Iran for the support it has given to his five-point plan to bring stability to Afghanistan. The

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Secretary-General stressed his intention to have further discussions on the subject when he visits Saudi Arabia later this week.

Among other topics under discussion, the official said, were security arrangements for the Persian Gulf region with the Secretary-General stressing that it was for the countries of that region to coordinate their approach and their efforts. Also discussed in a general way were the latest developments in the Soviet Union and their effects on the United Nations membership.

Following his meeting with the Foreign Minister, the Secretary-General met with the Iranian President whom he informed of his efforts to implement the outstanding paragraphs of resolution 598 and to bring stability to Afghanistan. President Rafsanjani shared his views with the Secretary-General and also informed him of the effects on the Iranian economy of the destruction caused by the war with Iraq.

The Secretary-General then received at his residence members of families of four Iranian diplomats who disappeared in Lebanon in 1984. He told them that despite his numerous efforts on their behalf, he had been unable so far to obtain information of a positive nature, but that he would continue his diplomatic efforts. Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar emphazised that he was doing everything he could to solve the problem of detainees regardless of their nationality through his humanitarian mission.

* * *

The Secretary-General has welcomed the decision of the Government of Guatemala to recognize the independent and sovereign State of Belize.

A United Nations official told correspondents today that Mr. Pérez de Cuellar considered this "an important step" towards the normalization of relations between the two neighbouring countries, the beneficial effects of which should extend to the political and economic aspects of the process of regional integration -- an objective which all Central American governments were seeking.

* * *

This year's annual Conference of the Department of Public Information (DPI) for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) began today its three-day session at Headquarters.

Antoine Blanca, Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, said in an opening statement that in an interdependent world, the actions of Governments would be incomplete if they were not backed by non-governmental organizations. The United Nations was not only an organization of Governments, but of peoples, and thus the actions of non-governmental organizations were extremely important.

Mr. Blanca then read out a message sent by Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, in which the Secretary-General stated that as new vistas opened for countries to

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work together in ways they had not done before, the role of non-governmental organizations, which was laid down in the Charter, would surely become increasingly important.

During the conference, participants will discuss such questions as the search for peace in the emerging world order, promoting economic and social justice through development, and the interrelationship between peace, justice and development in the work of the United Nations.

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